



# Victorian Cancer Trials Link

Clinical trial participant, Greg Lawson, shares his experience being treated in a cancer clinical trial

**My name is Greg Lawson. I've got melanoma and have had recurrence of that since my initial diagnosis in 2006, to as recently as September 2016.**

## **How did you gain access to a clinical trial?**

There was a trial that was being sponsored by my oncologist and the radio-oncology team. They offered it to me as an opportunity to treat one of the unresectable cancers, which was down in my abdomen.

## **Prior to this, what did you know about clinical trials?**

Other than my experience, my late wife who passed in 2014, was given an opportunity of going on to a trial. And through the support that I gave her, it sort of opened up my eyes to what trials could offer patients, as it were, outside of the regular treatments that are available, mainstream. So, that was certainly my introduction to trials and I had no hesitation as soon as there was an opportunity for me. One: to get an early treatment. But, more importantly, two: to provide something back to research. I jumped at the chance and have jumped a second time, as well, with the more recent trial that I've been on.



## **What information were you given before deciding to participate in a clinical trial?**

The information that I gleaned about the first trial was provided to me in a decent A4 pack of information. I also went online to understand some of the terminology that was being used and some of the potential side effects that could have occurred. Also just getting a layman's understanding of the terminologies that they were using in their briefing pack. So, that was the information that I gathered for myself. Both theirs and my own research. Looking back, there weren't any shocks, there weren't any negatives, it was reaffirmation that I was well briefed as to what things may have happened as a consequence of the treatment.

## **In your experience, are there any differences between standard care and the care you received in a clinical trial?**

The care with my standard treatment is: I visit my oncologist, get my blood tests, and I sit in a chair and get my infusion, and that's it. Done and dusted. Other than every three months I get a scan just to monitor. The hyper care that you get during the trial treatment is around the regiment that they must follow. Very prescriptive, laid out for them as to what to do, when, time frames. It's very regimented and, as a consequence, the staff are very disciplined but very supportive. Because they understand that it is intervening into your life and they're there to help and support as much as they possibly can.

## **Why did you decide to join a clinical trial?**

The thoughts I have when I get my treatment and when I talk to people, it oscillates between the two scenarios of it's helping me and it's helping a lot of people.

It changes spasmodically ... I certainly want a quality of life given what I've seen with my late wife. I've got three 20-year-old kids that I'd like to spend a bit more time with and potentially be a granddad. So, I'm sort of very selfish about the result that I get and the opportunity that I get.

In comparison, the opportunity for me to give back to the industry, give information to researchers, to validate their drug as being a marketable drug for treating melanoma is certainly a key driver for me, as well.

The opportunity to jump at the chance at a better quality of life, the opportunity of extending your time here with friends and family, I think a lot of people would take that chance. Trials typically can't really predict what the individual's going to receive, as far as the benefit. They can't predict what side effects they will specifically have as an individual, because their research is so new. It certainly is that opportunity of taking the chance that you are going to get a result for yourself, personally, alongside the opportunity to give back to the research world.

I'm on a trial, I'm feeling quite healthy, the side effects I get are limited. That opportunity for me to be able to go to work while I'm recovering from cancer and feel, should I use the word, normal. That opportunity was, certainly, something that I jumped at the chance to have and as long as I can help the community, either via participating in cancer trials or other activities, it's certainly an aspiration I've got for a very long time in my life.

To watch a video of Greg explaining his experience in full, visit  
**[www.cancervic.org.au/trials](http://www.cancervic.org.au/trials)**.

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